



Testimony to the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly

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Distinguished Committee Members:

This testimony is to ask you to reject Governor Rell's call to eliminate the Connecticut Commission on Aging.

On January 1, 2009 ITN*NorthCentralConnecticut*TM began offering rides 24/7 to seniors and adults with visually impairments in Bloomfield, East Granby, East Windsor, Enfield, Granby, Somers, South Windsor, Suffield, Windsor and Windsor Locks. This alternative program is unique and uses a combination of volunteer and paid drivers who provide rides in private vehicles. There is no restriction on the purpose of a ride, and help is offered to carry packages, fold walkers, and open doors.

ITN*NorthCentralConnecticut*TM is a community-supported nonprofit that does not use public dollars for operating expenses. Volunteers are used to keep the service affordable. Memberships, car donations, walks and other resources fund the operation.

In April of 2008 the Connecticut Commission on Aging worked with three senators to save our program. Elements of the state livery laws were so restrictive that our program of using volunteers could not have worked. We are going to have to give up any future in Connecticut. The Connecticut Commission on Aging took the lead in helping to solve this problem. They brought the issue to people who could and did make changes to state law. Section 11 of House Bill 5746 makes it possible to creative solutions that keep seniors independent in Connecticut.

The following graph shows the importance of focus on seniors. Between 2005 and 2030 the senior market (age 60 and over) will grow by 81% while the remaining adult market will grow by only 7%.

The Connecticut Commission on Aging needs to be in place to focus all of the resources to serve this important market. It has a fine record of bringing together stakeholders to identify problems and implement opportunities. The issues around senior mobility are so great that we all need to keep a strong focus. The Connecticut Commission on Aging impacts society in four areas: health, safety, relief for caregivers and revenues to the local business community by bringing back consumers of goods and services.

Do the math. We urge you to keep this vibrant commission for the people of this state.

Thank you very much.

